BATMAN
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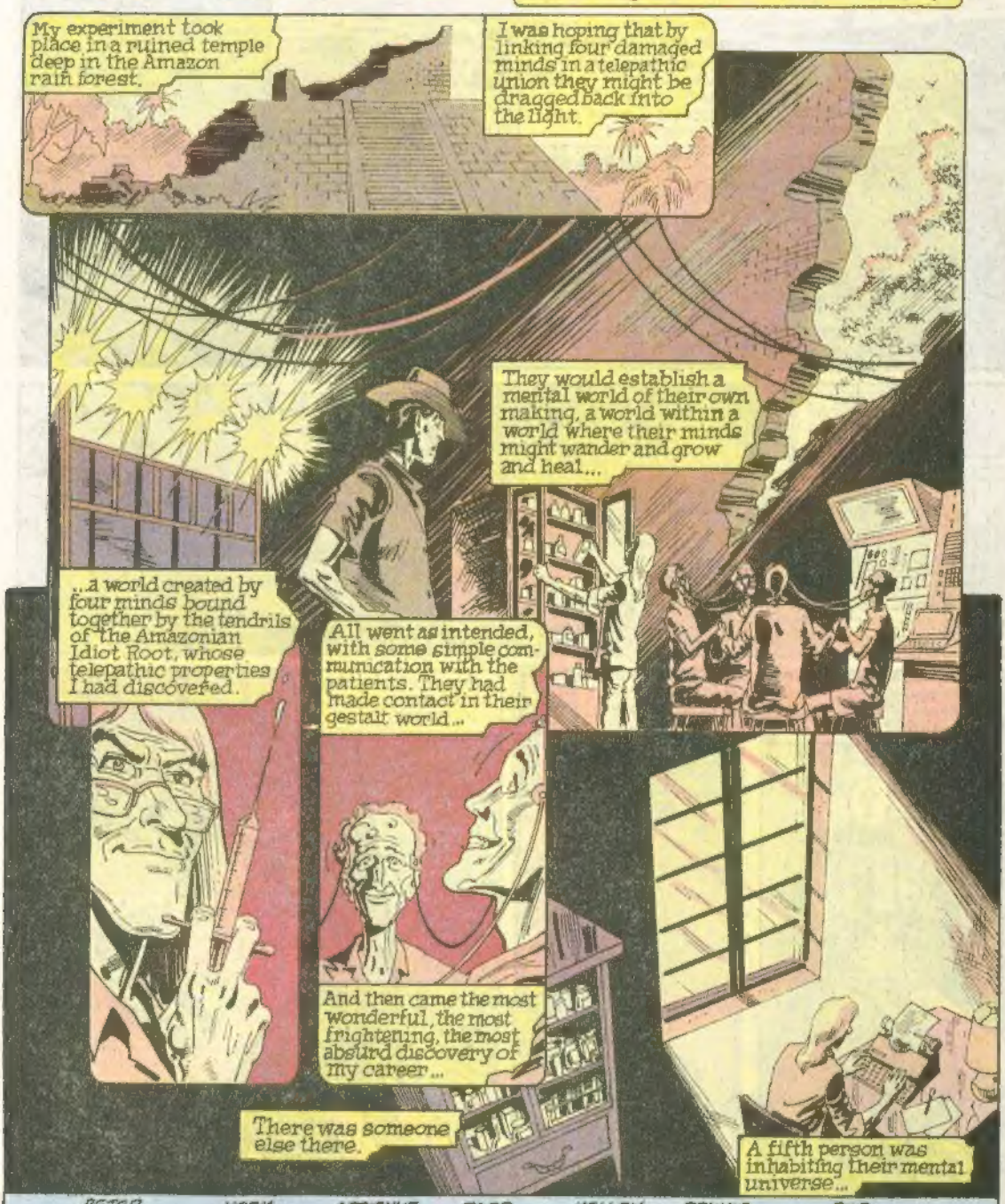
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
THE Idiot ROOT: PART ONE
ALAN GRANT
NORM BREYFOGLE

The Idiot

PART ONE: The Queen of Hearts


My experiment took place in a ruined temple deep in the Amazon rain forest.
I was hoping that by linking four damaged minds in a telepathic union they might be dragged back into the light.
They would establish a mental world of their own making, a world within a world where their minds might wander and grow and heal...
...a world created by four minds bound together by the tendrils of the Amazonian Idiot Root, whose telepathic properties I had discovered.
All went as intended, with some simple communication with the patients. They had made contact in their gestalt world...
And then came the most wonderful, the most frightening, the most absurd discovery of my career...
There was someone else there.
A fifth person was inhabiting their mental universe...

PETER MILLIGAN	NORM BREYFOGLE	ADRIENNE ROY	TODD KLEIN	KELLEY PUCKETT	DENNIS O'NEIL	BOB KANE
WRITER	ARTIST	COLORIST	LETTERER	ASST. EDITOR	EDITOR	BATMAN CREATOR

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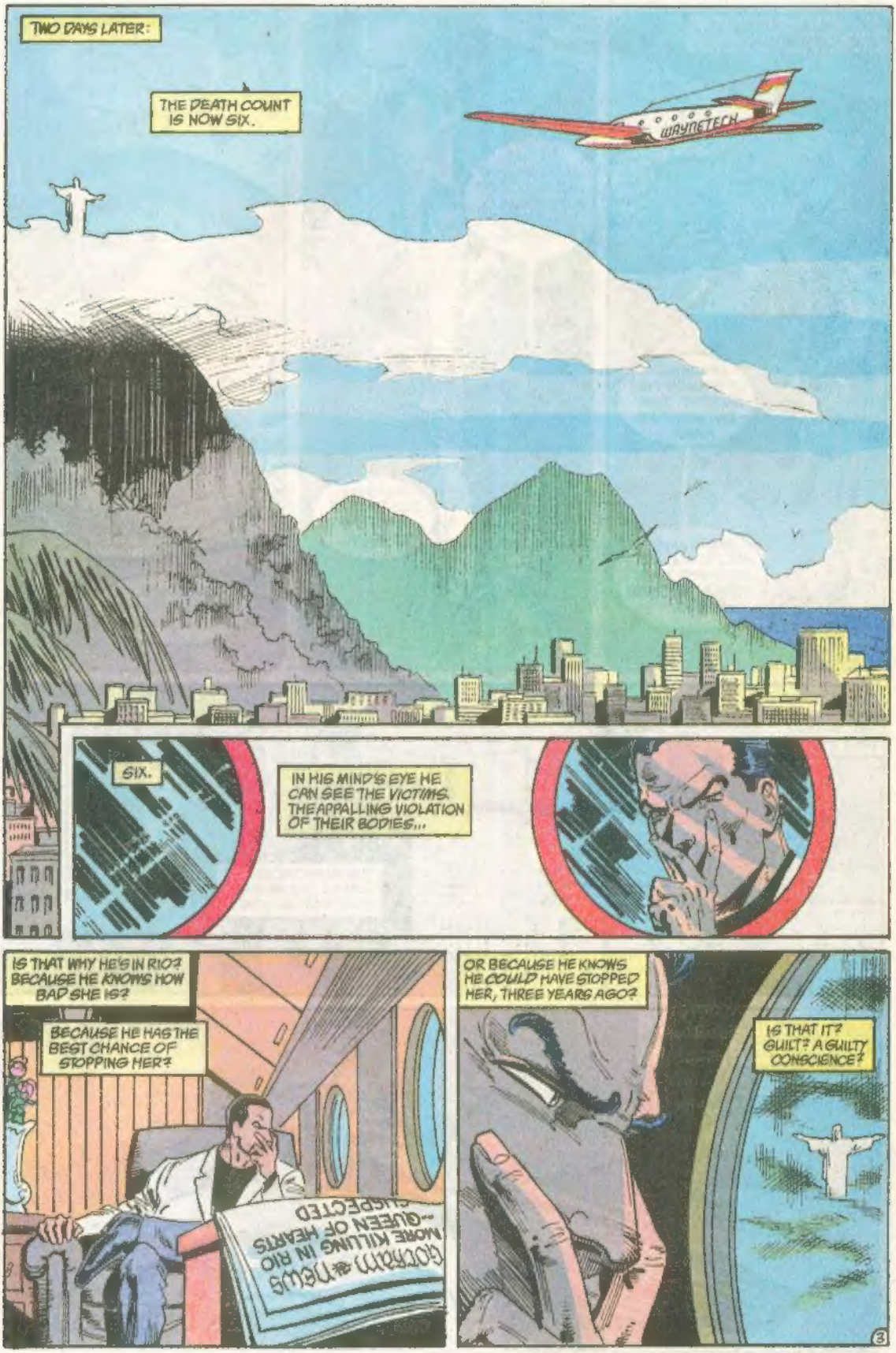
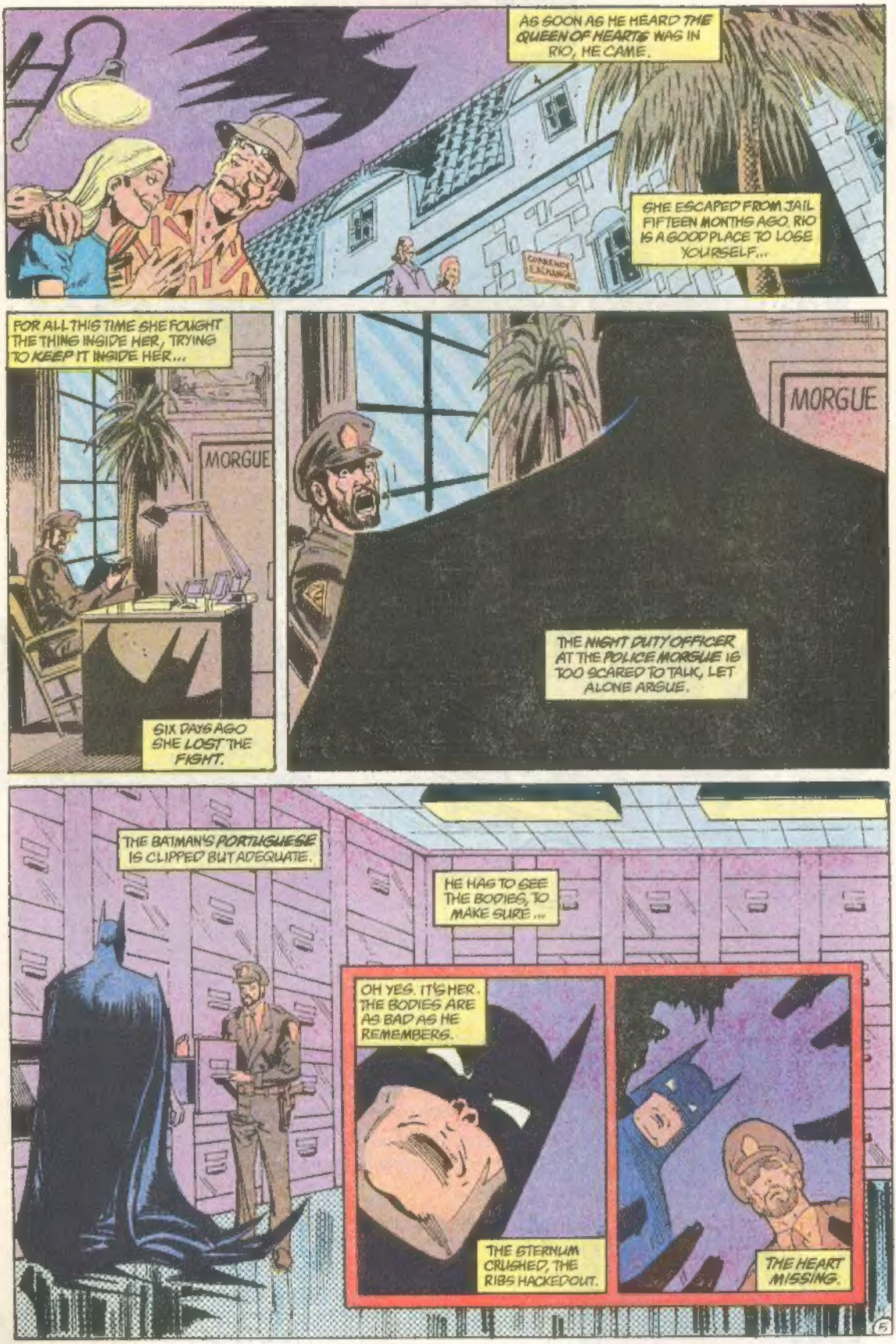
G-6427

RIO DE JANEIRO.
DOWNTOWN NEAR THE FAVELLAS, THE POOREST OF THE SLUMS, THE CROWDS GATHER FOR THE NIGHT...
SOME COME TO BE SPECTATORS.
MA
BAR
OTHERS TO CONDUCT THEIR BUSINESS.
THERE IS ONE WHO COMES BECAUSE OF A SPECIAL HUNGER.
?
REEEEEEEEEE
A HUNGER THAT CAN NEVER BE SATED.
THAT GROWS MORE RAVENOUS THE MORE IT IS FED.
THE BLOOD IS AS WARM AS THE BRAZILIAN NIGHT...
THIS IS NUMBER FOUR. HOW MANY MORE WILL IT TAKE?
2


TWO DAYS LATER:
THE DEATH COUNT IS NOW SIX.
WAYNETECH
SIX.
IN HIS MIND'S EYE HE CAN SEE THE VICTIMS. THE APPALLING VIOLATION OF THEIR BODIES...
IS THAT WHY HE'S IN RIO? BECAUSE HE KNOWS HOW BAD SHE IS?
BECAUSE HE HAS THE BEST CHANCE OF STOPPING HER?
GOTHAM NEWS
MORE KILLING IN RIO
--QUEEN OF HEARTS SUSPECTED
OR BECAUSE HE KNOWS HE COULD HAVE STOPPED HER, THREE YEARS AGO?
IS THAT IT? GUILT? A GUILTY CONSCIENCE?
8

THREE YEARS AGO SHE TOLD HIM. SHE TOLD HIM...
LET ME FALL. IT WOULDN'T BE MURDER. JUST LET GO OF MY HAND
IF YOU SAVE ME I'LL ESCAPE FROM WHATEVER PRISON THEY THROW ME INTO.
I'LL TRY TO GO STRAIGHT AND BE GOOD BUT EVENTUALLY I'LL HAVE TO START AGAIN...
AND ONCE I'VE STARTED I WON'T BE ABLE TO STOP...
YOU KNOW THAT NEXT TIME I WON'T STOP UNTIL I'VE WON YOUR HEART, BATMAN.
SO PLEASE. LET ME GO. LET ME DIE. LET ME SLEEP.
THE CITY NEVER SLEEPS. JUST LIKE GOTHAM, ONLY WARMER.
THE MUSIC MORE JOYFUL. THE AROMAS SOMEWHAT SWEETER...
IT TAKES TIME TO GET A FEEL OF THE STREETS, TO UNDERSTAND A CITY'S PARTICULAR LANGUAGE.
HE HAS NO TIME.
4


AS SOON AS HE HEARD THE QUEEN OF HEARTS WAS IN RIO, HE CAME.
SHE ESCAPED FROM JAIL FIFTEEN MONTHS AGO. RIO IS A GOOD PLACE TO LOSE YOURSELF...
FOR ALL THIS TIME SHE FOUGHT THE THING INSIDE HER, TRYING TO KEEP IT INSIDE HER...
MORGUE
SIX DAYS AGO SHE LOST THE FIGHT.
MORGUE
THE NIGHT DUTY OFFICER AT THE POLICE MORGUE IS TOO SCARED TO TALK, LET ALONE ARGUE.
THE BATMAN'S PORTUGUESE IS CLIPPED BUT ADEQUATE.
HE HAS TO SEE THE BODIES, TO MAKE SURE...
OH YES. IT'S HER. THE BODIES ARE AS BAD AS HE REMEMBERS.
THE STERNUM CRUSHED, THE RIBS HACKED OUT.
THE HEART MISSING.
6

WANNA SCORE?
HER PORTUGUESE HAS A WILTING YANKEE ACCENT...
SCORE? THAT SOUNDS FUN.
YES, I THINK I SHALL SCORE...
REEEE
EEE
IT'S THE LAST ACCENT THE BOY HEARS...
YOU PRETTY LITTLE THING, YOU.
EEEEEEE
HOW I LOVE TO SEE THOSE CUTE LITTLE HEARTS PUMPING.
HOW NICE IT IS TO FEEL THEM IN YOUR HANDS, LIKE LITTLE PUPPY DOGS...
HE CAN FEEL IT WHEN A BODY'S FOUND...
A HUM OF FEAR AND EXCITEMENT CRACKLING THROUGH THE STREETS...
THE LOCAL COP DOESN'T KNOW WHAT TO MAKE OF HIM.

THE WOUND IS RAGGED. THE QUEEN IS FOLLOWING HER USUAL PATTERN...
SHE STARTS OFF UNDER SOME KIND OF CONTROL...
BUT THE MORE SHE KILLS THE MORE FRENZIED SHE BECOMES...
SHE'LL BE HURTING NOW, IN SOME PART OF HER.
SHE'LL HAVE TO CONTINUE BUT SOME PART OF HER WILL BE WISHING SHE WERE DEAD...
SOME PART OF HER WILL BE WISHING BATMAN HAD KILLED HER THREE YEARS AGO.
SIRENS, GETTING CLOSER. THE FLASH OF A JOURNALISTS CAMERA.
WEEOOOEEEEEEE
FLASH!
HE LETS HIS PICTURE BE TAKEN. HE WANTS HIS PICTURE SPLASHED OVER EVERY PAPER IN TOWN...
WATCH OUT!
SKEECH!
YOU TRYING TO GET YOURSELF KILLED?

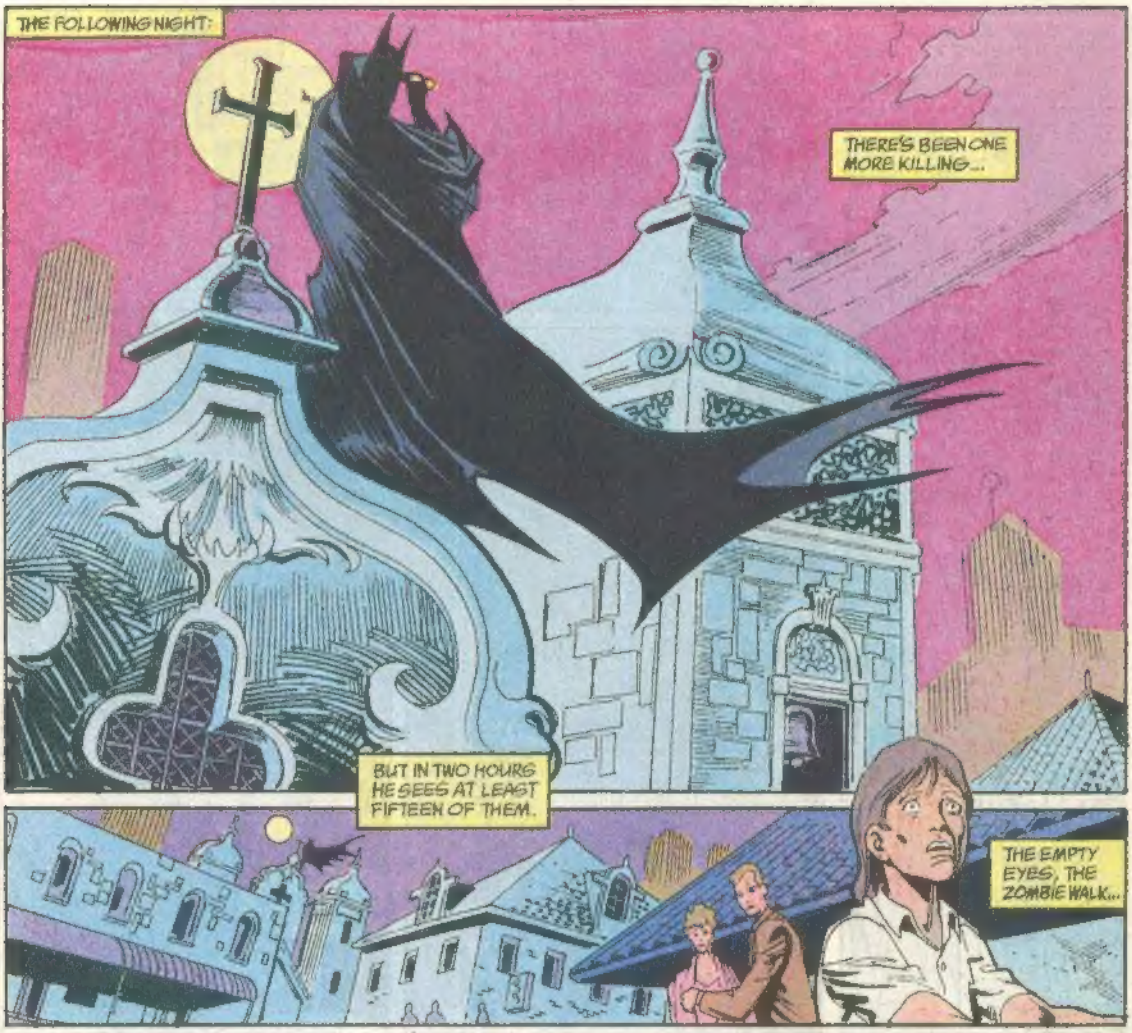
HEY, YOU'RE BATMAN? WHAT'RE YOU DOING IN RIO? I NEVER REALLY BELIEVED YOU WERE REAL, MAN...
POLICIA
WHAT'S WRONG WITH THAT KID? HIS EYES... THEY WERE EMPTY.

AW, FORGET HIM. THERE'RE PLENTY LIKE HIM IN RIO. HE'S PROBABLY IN A WORLD OF HIS OWN.
POLICIA

WHAT ARE YOU DOING TALKING TO THIS CRIMINAL, OFFICER? YOU SHOULD BE ARRESTING HIM, NOT CHATTING WITH HIM.
A... A... ARREST?

YEAH, ARREST! FOR BREAKING INTO THE POLICE MORGUE, FOR TERRORIZING MY OFFICERS!
WE DON'T WANT ANY AMERICAN VIGILANTES IN THIS TOWN!

THIS ISN'T GOTHAM!
YOU CROSS THE POLICE HERE AND YOU'RE IN TROUBLE!

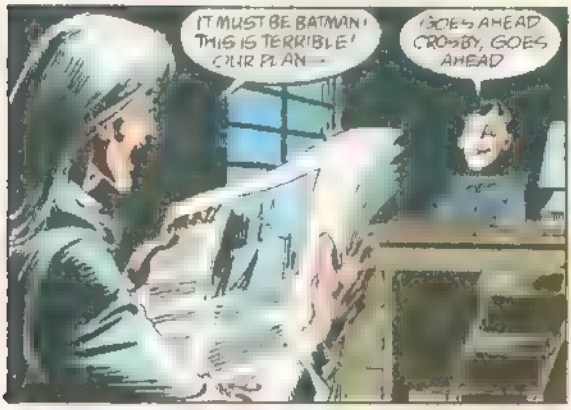

THE FOLLOWING NIGHT:
THERE'S BEEN ONE MORE KILLING...
BUT IN TWO HOURS HE SEES AT LEAST FIFTEEN OF THEM.
THE EMPTY EYES, THE ZOMBIE WALK...

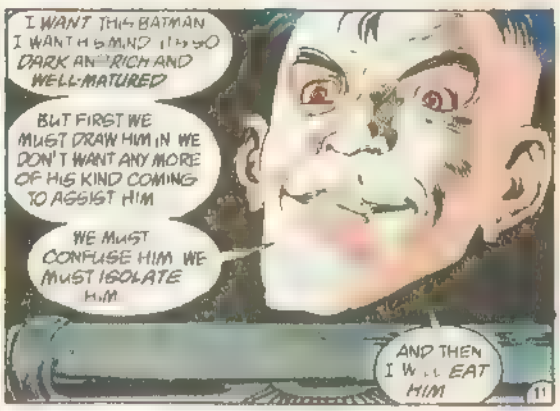
THIS IS A CHARITY HOSPITAL FOR KIDS MAINLY, SO WE SEE ALL SORTS. BUT THESE...
WE'VE GOT A DOZEN OF THEM ALREADY AND THEY SCARE ME.
HOSPITAL

ALL KINDS OF TESTS BEING DONE ON THEM, BUT NO SIGN OF ANYTHING. IT'S LIKE THEY JUST AREN'T THERE ANY-MORE.
THERE'S SUPPOSED TO BE A NEW DRUG ON THE STREETS. MAYBE THAT'S IT.
IT'S SUPPOSED TO MAKE YOU LEAVE YOUR BODY AND GO TO HEAVEN.
THE STREET KIDS CALL THESE CHILDREN DEAD BOYS, BY THE WAY.
DEAD BOYS.

THE STREETS ARE HOT AND STICKY TONIGHT AND HE HAS TO REMEMBER THAT HE IS HERE FOR THE QUEEN OF HEARTS HE MUSN'T GET SIDETRACKED
BUT THERE HE SEES IT. HE CANNOT IGNORE IT...
LIKE A SLICK CARD SHARP THE YOUNG DEALER SLIPS THE VIAL TO THE BOY.
THE QUEEN TARGETS DEALERS MAYBE THIS PUNK HAS HEARD SOMETHING ABOUT HER ON THE STREET... INC
MAYBE HE KNOWS SOMETHING ABOUT THE DEAD BOYS
YOU'RE IN A DANGEROUS BUSINESS
HUH?
THE QUEEN OF HEARTS IS WORKING THIS NEIGHBORHOOD
DROP DEAD
10

NICE KID
COME HERE..
GOOD EVENING, MASKED MAN
YOU CAN I GET ME, BUT I CAN GET YOU
IT GRINS LIKE A CHESHIRE CAT
THE BATMAN'S FINGERS CLASP SOMETHING LIKE CANDY
AND THEN NOTHING


IT MUST BE BATMAN! THIS IS TERRIBLE! OUR PLAN—
GOES AHEAD CROSBY, GOES AHEAD

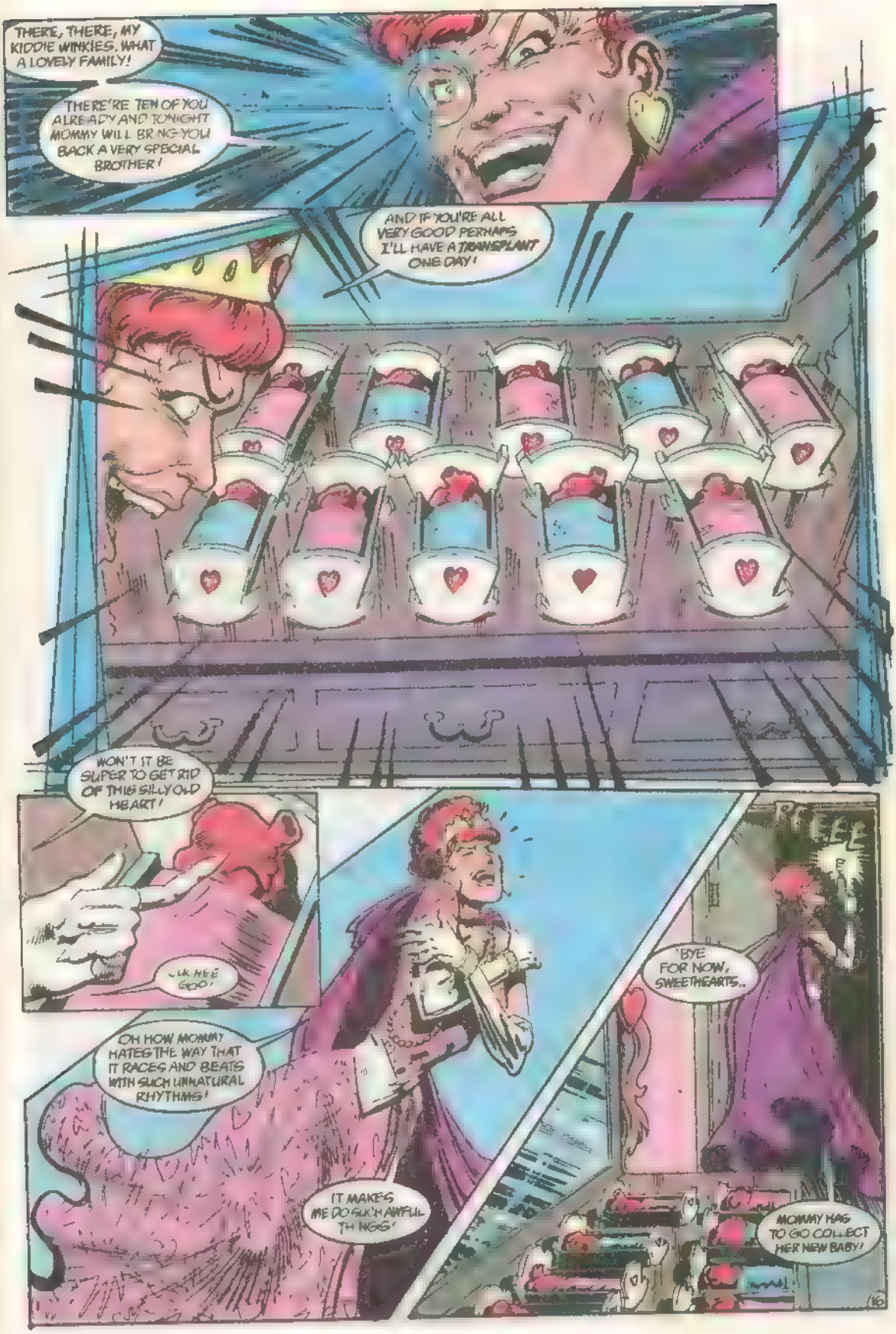

I WANT THIS BATMAN I WANT HIS MIND IT'S SO DARK AND RICH AND WELL-MATURED
BUT FIRST WE MUST DRAW HIM IN WE DON'T WANT ANY MORE OF HIS KIND COMING TO ASSIST HIM
WE MUST CONFUSE HIM WE MUST ISOLATE HIM
AND THEN I WILL EAT HIM

WHAT HAPPENED BACK THERE? THE QUEEN. THE DEAD BOYS THAT
Caesar Miraflores Hotel
NIGHT COVERS RIO DE JANEIRO. THE QUEEN WILL BE OUT. HE HOPES SHE HAS SEEN HIS PICTURE IN THE PAPERS
HE HOPES SHE STILL WANTS HIS HEART.
THE QUEEN WAS ONCE A REGULAR, SANE, RATHER STYLISHLY MALICIOUS
SOME BAD JUNK, A MESSY OVERDOSE WITH STRYCHNINE AND LAVATORY CLEANER IN HIS VEINS
IT BROKE THE QUEEN'S HEART..
BRNG
ONLY THEY KNOW THE NUMBER OF THIS WAYNE TECH APARTMENT
HELLO, TIM?
I'VE JUST GROWN A SECOND HEAD AND ONE OF MY ARMPITS HAS GONE MISSING.

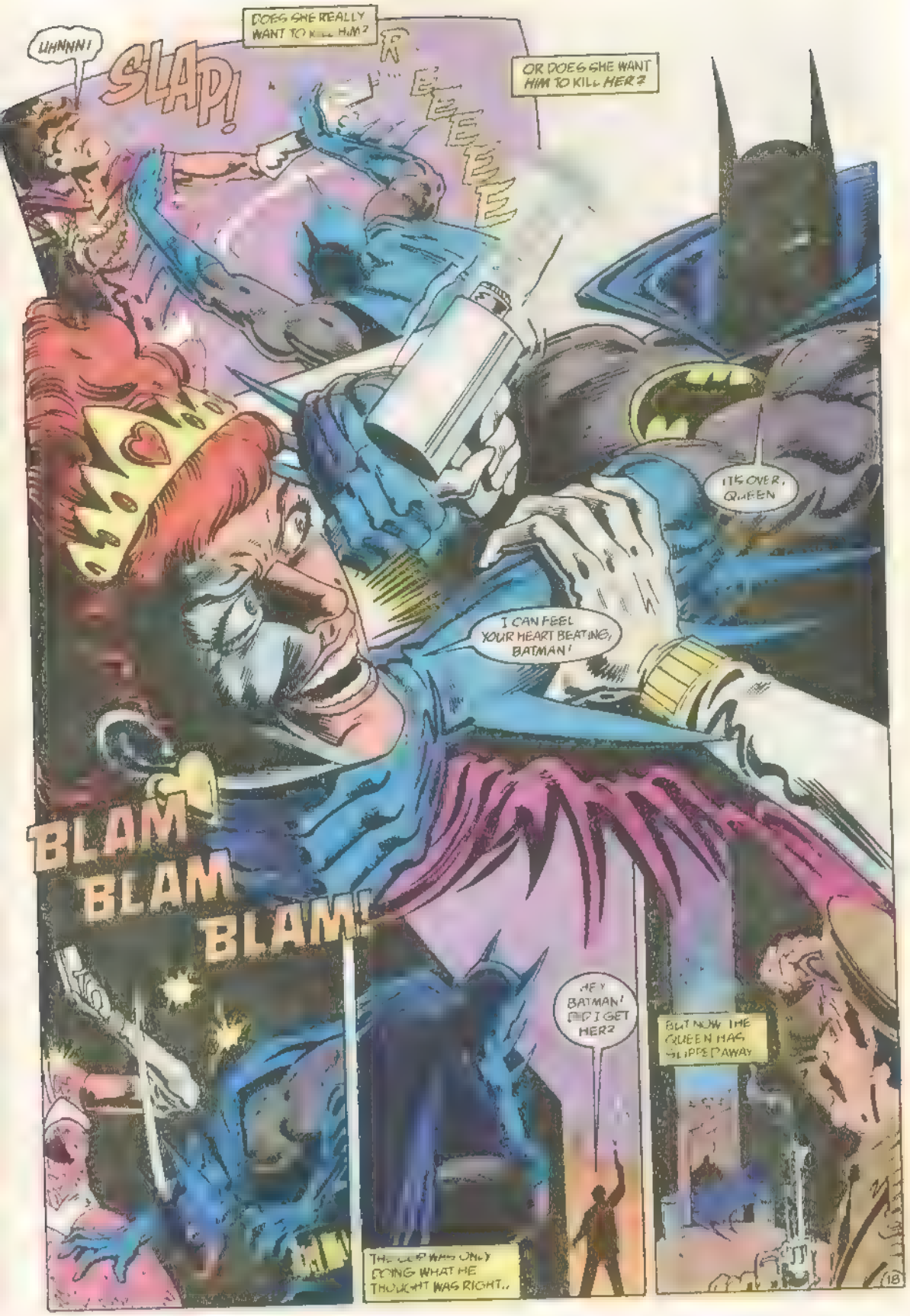
WHAT?! WHA' RE YOU TALKING ABOUT TIM?
OH, BATMAN! THIS ISN'T REALLY TIM. THIS IS ME AGAIN. THE GRINNING ONE.
I'M INSIDE YOUR HEAD. IT'S LIKE A WINDY CASTLE IN HERE! I'M LICKING THE DAMP FROM THE OLD STONE WALLS
AUDIO HALLUCINATION? THE PHONE? ONLY INSIDE YOUR HEAD?
TIM'S VOICE. EXACTLY LIKE TIM'S VOICE AND THEN THAT OTHER VOICE
SLAM
LIKE BROKEN GLASS TRICKLING DOWN HIS EARS
MUST PHONE TIM OR ALFRED
SEE IF THEY CALLED.
ALFRED, DID YOU OR TIM JUST CALL?
YES, BATMAN OF COURSE I CALLED
I AM THE IDIOT
I HAVE COME TO STEAL YOUR MIND AWAY
HELLO? HELLO?
MASTER BRUCE, IS THAT YOU?

IT'S IMPOSSIBLE BUT IT HAPPENED "INSIDE YOUR HEAD" THE VOICE SAID
AT FIRST THING SOUNDED EXACTLY LIKE TIM...
IT'S A SINKING FEELING, KNOWING YOUR OWN MIND MIGHT TURN TRAITOR ON YOU.
SUDDENLY THE NIGHT SEEMS EVEN MORE MENACING THAN USUAL
NO HE CAN'T ANSWER IT
I CAN'T BELIEVE ANYTHING HE HEARS
AFTER TWELVE RINGS IT STOPS.
HE CAN'T ANSWER THE PHONE OR CONTACT ANYONE UNTIL THIS THING IS OVER..
UNTIL WHATEVER'S INSIDE HIS HEAD...
...IS OUT
14

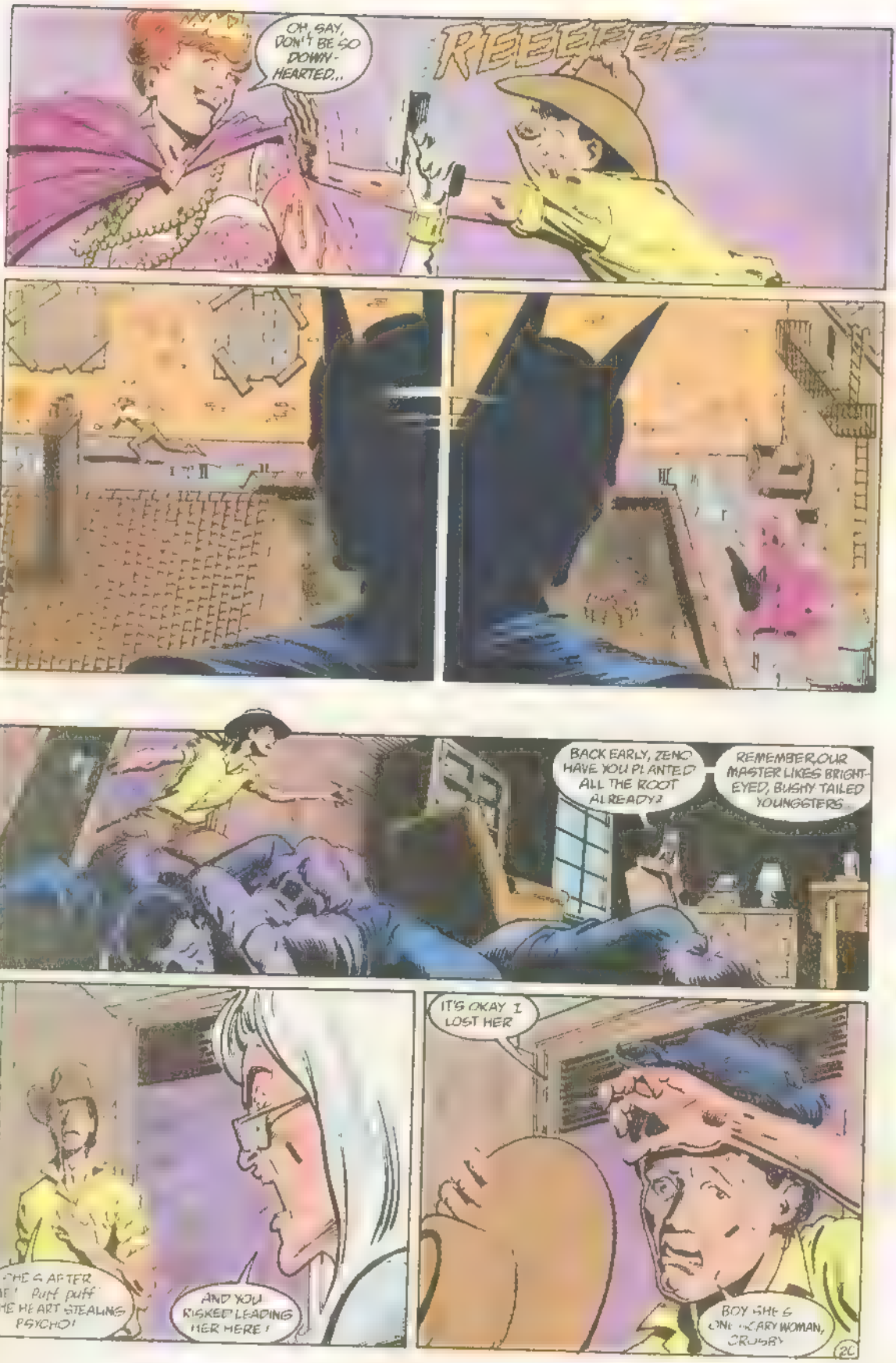
I JUST SMEARED A TINY B T ONTO HIS FACE MR CROSBY
ENOUGH FOR OUR MASTER TO GET A HOOK INTO HIM. THOUGH THAT WILL FADE WITH TIME UNLESS THE DOSE IS REPEATED...
NOW, TIME TO GET BACK TO WORK, ZENO.
BUT TAKE CARE STOCKS ARE LOW I'D RATHER NOT HAVE TO RETURN TO THE JUNGLE FOR MORE ROOT..
SO WHY DON'T THEY WORK?
THESE ANGELS ARE MY INSURANCE IF ANYTHING GOES WRONG HERE I'LL TAKE THEM INTO THE JUNGLE WITH ME..
.. AND I'LL GIVE THEM PERSONALLY TO THE IDIOT
ZZZZZ
THE QUEEN USUALLY WORKS ONE NEIGHBORHOOD DOESN'T LIKE TO TRAVEL.
NOW HE HAS TO WAIT, ALL SENSES PRIMED TO RECEIVE THE SLIGHTEST CHANGE IN ATMOSPHERE THAT COULD MEAN SHE HAS STRUCK AGAIN


THERE, THERE, MY KIDDIE WINKIES. WHAT A LOVELY FAMILY!
THERE'RE TEN OF YOU ALREADY AND TONIGHT MOMMY WILL BRING YOU BACK A VERY SPECIAL BROTHER!
AND IF YOU'RE ALL VERY GOOD PERHAPS I'LL HAVE A TRANSPLANT ONE DAY!
WON'T IT BE SUPER TO GET RID OF THIS SILLY OLD HEART!
...UK HEE GOO!
OH HOW MOMMY HATES THE WAY THAT IT RACES AND BEATS WITH SUCH UNNATURAL RHYTHMS!
IT MAKES ME DO SUCH AWFUL THINGS!
'BYE FOR NOW, SWEETHEARTS..
MOMMY HAS TO GO COLLECT HER NEW BABY!
16

ZWEEEEEEEEE
HALF AN HOUR LATER HE HEARS A SCREAM, LIKE A STONE DROPPED INTO THE NIGHT...
MAKING RIPPLES OF FEAR AND DEATH
A SMALL CROWD HAS GATHERED. THE SOUND OF APPROACHING SIRENS MEANS HE HAS LITTLE TIME...
DO YOU WANT ME, QUEEN? DO YOU STILL WANT MY HEART?
THERE. THERE IT IS. A SIGN LYING IN THE GARBAGE, WAITING FOR HIM.
THREE MORE LEAD HIM TO A TINY BACKSTREET WHERE THE STENCH MAKES HIS NOSTRILS CONTRACT.
WHERE ARE YOU, QUEEN? ANY MORE KILLS TO ROCK?
REEEEEEE


UHNNN!
SLAP!
DOES SHE REALLY WANT TO KILL HIM?
OR DOES SHE WANT HIM TO KILL HER?
IT'S OVER, QUEEN
I CAN FEEL YOUR HEART BEATING, BATMAN!
BLAM BLAM BLAM!
HEY BATMAN! DID I GET HER?
BUT NOW THE QUEEN HAS SLIPPED AWAY
THE CLOWN WAS ONLY DOING WHAT HE THOUGHT WAS RIGHT..

SHE'LL BE ENFLAMED NOW SHE CAME CLOSE TO A KILL, TO A HEART...
SHE'LL HAVE TO KILL AGAIN QUICKLY
AND THEN A FAMILIAR FACE MOVES FROM THE SHADOWS
THE LITTLE DEALER...
THINK THE KID TOUCHED YOU AS HE RAN PAST IT WAS AFTER THAT THAT THE GRINNING ONE APPEARED...
TOUCHED YOU DEALER DEAD BOYS INSIDE YOUR HEAD.
THE KID KNOWS HIS PATCH
HE LIVES IN THE SHADOWS
CLICK
REE EEE
19


OH SAY, DON'T BE SO DOWNY-HEARTED,,
REEEEEE
BACK EARLY, ZENO HAVE YOU PLANTED ALL THE ROOT ALREADY?
REMEMBER,OUR MASTER LIKES BRIGHT-EYED, BUSHY TAILED YOUNGSTERS
SHE'S AFTER ME! Puff puff THE HEART STEALING PSYCHO!
AND YOU RISKED LEADING HER HERE!
IT'S OKAY I LOST HER
BOY SHE'S ONE SCARY WOMAN, CRUSTY
20

I'M NOT SCARY ONCE YOU GET TO KNOW ME, CUTIE PIE...
REEEEEEEEEEEEEE
YAAHH!
WUMP!
GNNNNNNNSS
COME, ZENO. OUR WORK MUST NOT BE CURTAILED NOW.
HNNF
NO!
CHASH!
FOOL!
IT WON'T BE HEAVEN AWAITING YOU!
HE FEELS THE LIQUID BRUSHING HIS FACE. THE QUEEN HAS CAUGHT MOST OF IT...
21

AND THEN EVERYTHING TURNS SOFT.
THE COLORS RUNNING TOGETHER, HIS LEGS LIKE HONEY, THE QUEEN OF HEARTS SWAYING AND A VOICE BEHIND HIM SAYING...
PSST. THIS IS MY WORLD NOW. THIS IS THE WORLD WITHIN THE WORLD.
LET ME INTRODUCE MYSELF...
I AM THE IDIOT.
I HAVE COME TO STEAL YOUR MIND AWAY!
CONTINUED IN DETECTIVE #639!

BAT-SIGNALS

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Dear Denny and Kelley:

I must say that my absolute favorite moment in any comic happened in BATMAN #466. I am, of course, referring to page 22, panel 2. It was at that moment that Batman thought, "I made the right choice. He has what it takes. And more."

THANK YOU, ALAN GRANT!!!!! This one panel totally made my day! Finally, Batman admits that his choice to make Tim the third Robin was a good decision. Although I enjoyed the entire story, that one panel really made me want to stand up and cheer. Finally, Tim is accepted! Tim is accepted! Tim is accepted!

Once again, THANK YOU, ALAN GRANT!!!!!!

Jason Crase
3022 Huntington Dr.
Arlington Heights, IL 60004

* * * * *

Dear Bat-Signals,

Re: BATMAN #466

Again, another story with Tim out in public, in costume. He is turning into Batman Jr. Nothing wrong with that, I guess! He handled the sniper very well.

There were people who liked Jason Todd (not very many judging by previous letter columns) and didn't want him to die. There were people who liked Dick Grayson and never wanted Jason in the first place, and they hated him and wanted him to die. I'd have to say I'm with them. When Jason died even I was choked up. But I got to miss the character Robin no matter who he was.

Ever since 1940, Robin has been a tradition in BATMAN and 'TEC almost. Tim could make it. But Jason was a little unstable. I think Dick could've made it.

What about Tim's father? Tim hasn't gotten home yet?

Sincerely,
John Richardson
Midland, TX

Well, John, Tim's father is still in critical condition, but he's getting better. What happens when he recovers and gets back together with Tim? That's a good question. You'll just have to wait and see.

Dear Denny, Kelley, and Alan,

"No More Heroes" in BATMAN #466 was the absolute best one-shot story that Alan Grant has ever done. The dark cunning of Batman, the skill and compassion of Robin, and the guilt and indecision of the sniper were superbly crafted into a masterpiece.

And then there is Norm's art. Batman on the second panel of page 14, and Robin on the last panel of page 20 showed how both these characters should look. Kudos to the whole creative team.

And I think it was important to notice that it was Robin, not Batman, who nailed Willy the Sap at the end. Also, Robin was the one who comforted the distraught would-be killer. This issue should finally lay to rest any debate about whether Robin can handle himself.

Now all that's left is for Ace to join the action, and you'll be set for the '90s... and beyond.

Thanks for listening.
Jay McIntyre
35 Meadow Ln.
Doylestown, PA

* * * * *

Dear Kelley,

BATMAN #466 was the stuff comic book legends are made of.

Don't get me wrong; I'm not some snot-nosed fanboy who proclaims every hot artist and/or writer is the next Kirby or Kane, but it's issues like these that establish writers and/or artists as legends.

Grant and Breyfogle are at their best when they do these short, one- to two-issue, hard-hitting and message-driven stories. Nearly their entire run on DETECTIVE comprised such excellent work. Who can forget such memorable stories as "Trash," "Street Demonz," and the Anarky storyline? All were one to two issues long, and all were beautifully done. And they didn't ignore the classic Bat-villains, either. The Joker, Cat-Man and Catwoman all made appearances...in one-issue stories, no less! Using such major villains in one-timers was practically unheard of until then.

But I digress. The overall quality of these stories has been so good that I haven't even been considering the actual art or words, just basking in their glow! Issue #466 was very well done, and reminiscent of "Trash" and "Street Demonz" in that they were all excellent and message-driven. The speech by Robin on page 16 was beautiful. And the art... Wow! I'd never noticed Breyfogle much, but I'm really starting to like him lots, even though I still consider Aparo's Batman to be definitive.

Sincerely,
Matt Springer
16050 Ellis Ave.
So. Holland, IL 60473

That's the beauty of it, Matt. Whether you prefer Aparo's classic Batman or Breyfogle's soon-to-be classic Batman, you can see 'em both—just buy both BATMAN and DETECTIVE COMICS! What a deal!

Makes you feel all warm inside, doesn't it?

* * * * *

Dear Kelley,

Perhaps it was intentional since Robin's return is still new, but I thought he stole the show in BATMAN #466 and should have been on the cover. It's good again to have a Robin you can like.

To me, this issue seemed to say that we have a funny way of choosing heroes.

Melissa Page
236 New Salem Loop
Nortonville, KY 42442

* * * * *

Dear Denny and Kelley,

Whew! At first I thought that this issue wouldn't feature Robin along with Batman. What happened to the logo, BATMAN WITH ROBIN? You threw me off when I didn't see this on the cover. I really liked the cover logo on issue #465. How about bringing it back and making it a regular for this magazine?

Ya know, with all these biweekly titles out now, I'm gonna be broke for most of the summer! If you guys keep on putting out stories like issue #466, though, it will be worth it! I especially liked pages 13 and 20. These action sequences were very powerfully drawn. Norm Breyfogle draws the new Robin better than anyone else (so far). And if not for Alan Grant's stories, Norm wouldn't be able to display these wonderful images. They're a great team with great talents.

After these two one-part stories, we're just about due for a multi-parter, aren't we? How about a story featuring the Ventriloquist?

Thanks for the kind attention,
Marc Johnson
1734 Shadewood Ln.
San Diego, CA 92139

A multi-part story featuring the Ventriloquist? Like, say, starting in BATMAN #475, crossing over into DETECTIVE #642, and finishing up in BATMAN #476? Like maybe call it

"The Return of Scarface?" Something like that?
Yeah, OK!

* * * * *

Dear Batman,
I like you very, very much. I do not like Joker.
Matt Funk
(Matt's address withheld because I can't read his writing)

Be careful what you say, Matt. The Joker can read your writing.

* * * * *

Hey, guys,
I just finished BATMAN #466 and I am upset. Batman says on the last page, "I made the right choice. He has what it takes. And more."
Do you know why this hurts? Because you're making a mockery of the memory of Jason. Jason was killed by popular vote, and could've been as good a Robin as anybody. He had what it took, too, but the audience didn't want him. Now you're saying the audience does want this one. I don't believe it. Why would they sacrifice Jason for Tim?
I'm not saying get rid of Tim, because I know you wouldn't. He's here to stay. But please either quit telling us how good Tim is (if he's that good, we'll figure it out ourselves) or don't forget Jason. He was a good soldier, and according to you he was mourned by millions. Remember him.
Thank you for your time,
(Name withheld because the writer didn't sign the letter)

* * * * *

Bat-Dude,
Re: BATMAN #466
Made the right choice??? Hey, did you know reckless child endangerment is against the law??? Somebody stop that caped creep!!!
Partying through '91,
(Same address as above, still lacking a signature)

Chill out, Partying through '91. You're just sore about Jason.

* * * * *

Dear DC Comics,
Hi. My name is Zack Keener. I'm from St. Peters, Missouri. I was wondering if you would think of a movie called "Son of Batman."
Starring me.
I'm not trying to be greedy, but please just think about it.
Sincerely,
Zack Keener
10 Amanda Ct.
Saint Peters, MO 63376

Sorry, Zack. We're not in charge of the movies, just the comic books.

* * * * *

Dear Sirs,
A few months ago someone brought up the issue of the origin of the dinosaur and the giant 1947 penny in the Batcave, in the letter column of one of the Batman titles. I'm sorry, but I am unable to locate the issue now and I cannot recall which title it appeared under. The way in which the question was answered led me to believe that the writer did not know the answer either.
I have recently come across a writer's reference in a comic eleven years old which indicates that the mechanical tyrannosaurus first appeared in a story in BATMAN #35, and the giant penny appeared in WORLD'S FINEST #30. I do not have these issues, and as far as I know, they have never been reprinted. If no one at DC is familiar with their contents, could you please print this letter so your readership can help solve this interesting little issue of Bat-history?
Sincerely yours,
Dr. Andrew C. Kolbert
2 Physikalisches Institut
Universitat Stuttgart
WEST GERMANY

I checked those issues in the DC Library, Andrew, and you are correct! Congratulations. We don't have any official prizes I can give you, but if that professorship gig doesn't work out, give us a call—you sound like you have the makings of a fine assistant editor.

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SPECIAL APOLOGY DEPARTMENT: If you've been to your local comics store recently, chances are you've seen the stunning ELSEWORLDS poster advertising our upcoming Batman projects. Because of design considerations, we had to cut out the part of the poster that had the artist's signature on it. It was painted by Norm Breyfogle. Sorry, Norm.
(If you haven't seen it, go check it out! It's great.)

MEANWHILE, IN GOTHAM CITY... Batman's gone, Robin's alone, and the Joker just escaped from Arkham Asylum! He's got some nasty plans in store for the people of Gotham, and it's up to Robin to stop him! You can't afford to miss this one, folks! ROBIN II: JOKER'S WILD, by Chuck Dixon, Tom Lyle, and Bob Smith. Issues one and two on sale this month.

NEXT ISSUE: Things go from bad to worse as Batman enters the Idiot Zone to do battle with the Idiot himself! First pick up part two in DETECTIVE #639, then come back here for part three of "The Idiot," by Peter Milligan and Norm Breyfogle.

—Kelley Puckett
much too tired to think of
a groovy exit line

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From the Den

Did you hear that *whoosh*? Rest easy. It wasn't the hurricane it must have sounded like. It was six people breathing a sigh of relief.

The six are Archie Goodwin, Jonathan Peterson, Kelley Puckett, Mike Carlin, Dan Jurgens and me. (Oh, and Mac, who has access to my computer and everything else. She makes seven.) We happy few were the only earthly creatures who knew the identity of Monarch. Monarch, for those of you who haven't been keeping up on your required reading, was the rampaging baddie from the future who made life miserable for characters in almost all of DCs annuals this year. In the first installment, we established that he (or she) was a hero from the present era who, at the end of the next decade, goes sour and time-travels to eradicate any potential enemies. The drama was played out in the ensuing 13 stories and came to a climax in a book that left the printers a few hours ago. As I type this, on the evening of September 4, some of you are probably looking at it.

The series would have lost considerable impact if anyone learned early who, exactly, Monarch is. Only those with an absolute need to know (or who have access to a certain computer) were in on the secret. (Our publisher, Paul Levitz, refused to let us tell him Monarch's real name. If the word got out, nobody was going to blame *him*.) So we seven have had to very, *very* carefully watch our tongues for months now. It hasn't been easy. Jonathan and I would be chatting about the project and I'd start to speak the forbidden syllables and then I'd notice that Jon's office mate, Dan Raspler, had wandered in and...was he really absorbed in the script he was reading? Or was he *listening?* Well, we would take no chances. 'Bye, Jon. And 'bye, Dan. And don't pretend you didn't hear me, Raspler!

Of course, if Dan *had* overheard anything, he would have kept mum, as would anyone else on the staff. But we seven had made a pact and we were determined to honor it.

We did. Do you know that self-censorship is a colossal pain? No? Then you weren't around to hear us say "ouch."

But the need is no more and—

HANK HALL. YES, *THAT* HANK HALL—HAWK OF THE HAWK AND DOVE TEAM. HANKHALL/HAWK/HANKHALL/HAWK/HANK/HAWK/HAKHAWKHANKHAWKHANKHAWKHANKYHAWKYHAHAHAHAHAHAHA

Whoosh.

DENNY